forthwith from a situation that has been rendered both unhappy and untenable.'

Still insistent that no constitutional issue had arisen, Mr. Baldwin next dealt with the possibility of a morganatic marriage. This proposal, he said, he had, as in duty bound, laid before the Cabinet, but was not surprised when it was unanimously rejected. There the matter stood—morganatic marriage ruled out, Mrs. Simpson as Queen ruled out, no pressure brought to bear on the King, and above all no constitutional issue. Could anything be more straightforward ?

Straightforward it might seem to Mr. Baldwin and to Members of Parliament; but to others, not so straightforward. The King, it appeared, was making up his mind, but about what? Not whether or no he should marry Mrs. Simpson, morganatically or royally, because Mr. Baldwin had said that was impossible; not whether or no he should abdicate, because Mr. Baldwin had said no pressure was being brought to bear on him; not whether or no he should dispense with his present Ministers, and appoint others, or rule without Parliament, because Mr. Baldwin said no constitutional issue had arisen. What, then, was he being called on to decide ?

No one quite knew. Comment was endless and confused; rumours circulated, and each individual had his point of view, rarely expressed with lucidity. The topic became an obsession, precluding all other interests. Once more there was the feeling, experienced so often in recent years, to be experienced again, that some vital issue was being decided, but without any clear

awareness of what that issue was, or how forces were aligned, who was friend and who enemy, who for righteousness and who for unrighteousness. Noisiest supporters of the King were Sir Oswald Mosley, Mr. Pollitt, Lady Houston, Lords Rothermere and Beaverbrook, the *Catholic Times* and *Social Credit,* which saw 'a conflict, enacted before us at the moment as on a stage/ 'between the philosophy of Social Credit and that of International Finance Credit';[38] while opposition was most marked among

[88] Quoted in *The Magic of Monarchy* by Kingsley Martin.